



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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CONTACT: Joseph Donovan, Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

Wisconsin's 14 Presidential Scholar Semifinalists named

MADISON— Fourteen Wisconsin students are among nearly 550 semifinalists for the 2006 Presidential Scholars program, one of the national's highest honors given to graduating seniors.

"These students are among the highest academic and artistic achieving students in our state and nation," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster.

Wisconsin's Presidential Scholar Semifinalists are

- Theresa C. Anderson, Catholic Memorial High School, Waukesha;
- Kellene N. Buchwald of Waukesha, Brookfield Academy;
- Ryan A. Dzelzkalns, Whitefish Bay High School;
- Sara E. Fowler, East High School, Wauwatosa;
- Brian Lee, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Adeyinka A. Lesi, West High School, Madison;
- Nathaniel D. Little, Cedarburg Senior High School;
- Elizabeth D. Moss of Cedarburg, Homestead High School, Mequon;
- Maura A. Otto of Brookfield, Divine Savior Holy Angels High School, Milwaukee;
- Melanie R. Rawlings, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Ilari A. Shafer, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Alex F. Thompson, South High School, Waukesha;
- Nicholas M. Wage, East High School, Appleton; and
- Grace E. Weber of Wauwatosa, Pius XI High School, Milwaukee.

Most students are chosen for the Presidential Scholars based on exceptional performance on the ACT or SAT college admissions tests. Fowler and Weber are among students nominated through their participation in the Arts Recognition and Talent Search program, sponsored by the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts.

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From nearly 2.8 million graduating high school seniors, 2,700 students were identified as candidates for the program and invited to complete application materials that include essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports, and transcripts. An independent, national committee of educators convened by the Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews application materials to select semifinalists. The number of semifinalists selected for each state is based on a proportionate number of test-takers for that state.

The Commission on Presidential Scholars will make the final selection of the nation's 121 Presidential Scholars—one male and one female from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. In addition, up to 15 students are chosen at large. The Presidential Scholars Commission also chooses the 20 Presidential Scholars in the Arts for a total of 141 Presidential Scholars.

Students chosen as Presidential Scholars travel to Washington, D.C., in June where they will meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, and scientists, and they will receive a Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House. Scholars are asked to identify one teacher who was most influential in their education. The teacher also is invited to the nation's capital for National Recognition Week and receives the Presidential Scholars program Teacher Recognition Award.

The Presidential Scholars program was established by executive order in 1964 to recognize students who have demonstrated academic excellence and leadership.

"These students, through their efforts and the support of their parents and teachers, demonstrate that dedication to academic and extracurricular work leads to success," Burmaster said.

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